



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

### III.—THE RELATIVE POSITION OF ACTORS AND CHORUS IN THE GREEK THEATRE OF THE V CENTURY B. C.<sup>1</sup>

#### PART I.

##### CONSIDERATION OF THE EXTANT THEATRES.

##### THE GREEK THEATRE.

It has been assumed, and by many writers on the subject it is assumed to-day, that the great Athenian dramatists, Vitruvius, all the grammarians, lexicographers and scholiasts had before their eyes the same Greek theatre, which remained practically unchanged from the time of Aischylos to the days when Nero and Hadrian were spectators in the theatre of Dionysos. The 'Vitruvian stage' has been accepted as *the* Greek stage for the entire period of the Greek drama, and the description of the Greek theatre by the same authority has been used as a Procrustes bed to which all plans of theatre ruins must in some way be made to conform.

Within the last decade, however, the revolt against the writers of post-classic times as authorities on the theatre of the V century has been rapidly spreading. The excavations in the theatres of Athens, Epidauros, Sikyon, Oropos, Megalopolis, and Eretria have yielded results of the highest importance. With the knowledge gained from these excavations, with the carefully drawn plans of these theatres before us, the older works dealing with the construction of the Greek theatre, and plans such as are found in Wieseler's 'Theatergebäude' must be considered as antiquated. Therefore, before entering upon the discussion of the extant dramas, we will consider the Greek theatre as described in classic

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this paper has already appeared under the title 'Der Standort der Schauspieler und des Chors im griechischen Theater des fünften Jahrhunderts. (Inaugural-Dissertation.) Mit dem Accessit gekrönte Preisschrift. München, 1892.' Contrary to the usage of the Journal, the paper is reproduced here as a necessary introduction to the new matter which will be embraced in the subsequent article.—B. L. G.

literature and as it actually exists in the more recent and more important excavations.<sup>1</sup>

*Theatre of Dionysos at Athens.*<sup>2</sup>

Oldest of the existing ruins are the remains of the ancient orchestra, *KNO* (vid. Fig. 1). All stage-buildings of which traces still exist were built over a portion of this circle. A glance at the plan shows that the present cavea has no connection with it. At *O* the Acropolis rock was cut away in order to make room for this circle; so the level of this entire orchestra could not have been lower than the rock at *O* is to-day. At *N* and *K* are still *in situ* portions of the circular supporting wall, whose character can best be studied at *N*. It is built of roughly shaped pieces of Acropolis limestone, which is the oldest building material in Athens, and was not used later than the V century. This is plainly a supporting wall; the outside was intended to be seen, but the inside is rough, just as the stone was broken from the quarry. The bottom of this wall at *N* is 5 or 6 ft. lower than *O*. Therefore the level of the earth within the orchestra circle at *KN* was originally at least 5 or 6 ft. above the level of the ground outside the circle at these points. This fact alone is fatal to the theory of Wilamowitz (Hermes, XXI, S. 597 ff.) that the audience to the earlier plays of Aeschylus stood or sat in a complete circle about this orchestra. Furthermore, at the time when this orchestra was constructed no stage-building<sup>3</sup> could have existed. For, if present, its front must have been nearly tangent to the circle on the south. In that event the level of the orchestra must needs have been continued to the entire front of the stage-building, the outer surface of the wall *KN* would not have been carefully dressed, and, in fact, this wall would not have been necessary at all. It has also been urged that a 'stage' 10-12 ft. high was

<sup>1</sup> Some of the more important discussions are: Höpken, *De theatro Attico saeculi a. Chr. quinti*. A. Müller, *Bühnenalterthümer*, and *Philol. Anz.* XV 525 ff. Wilamowitz, *Hermes*, XXI, S. 597 ff. Haigh, *Attic Theatre*. Dörpfeld: in A. Müller's *Bühnenalterthümer*, S. 415 ff.; on Haigh, *Attic Theatre*, in *Philol. Wochenschrift*, 1890, S. 461 ff.; on Hartzmann, *Quaestiones Scaenicae*, *ibid.*, S. 1658 ff.; on Oehmichen, *Bühnenwesen*, *ibid.*, S. 1532 ff. Kawerau, in *Baumeister's Denkmäler*, S. 1730 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The facts concerning the Athens theatre are from the lectures of Dörpfeld in the theatre itself during the winter of 1890-91.

<sup>3</sup> As a matter of convenience, 'stage,' 'stage-buildings,' etc., will be used, though the writer is convinced that no stage existed in the V century.

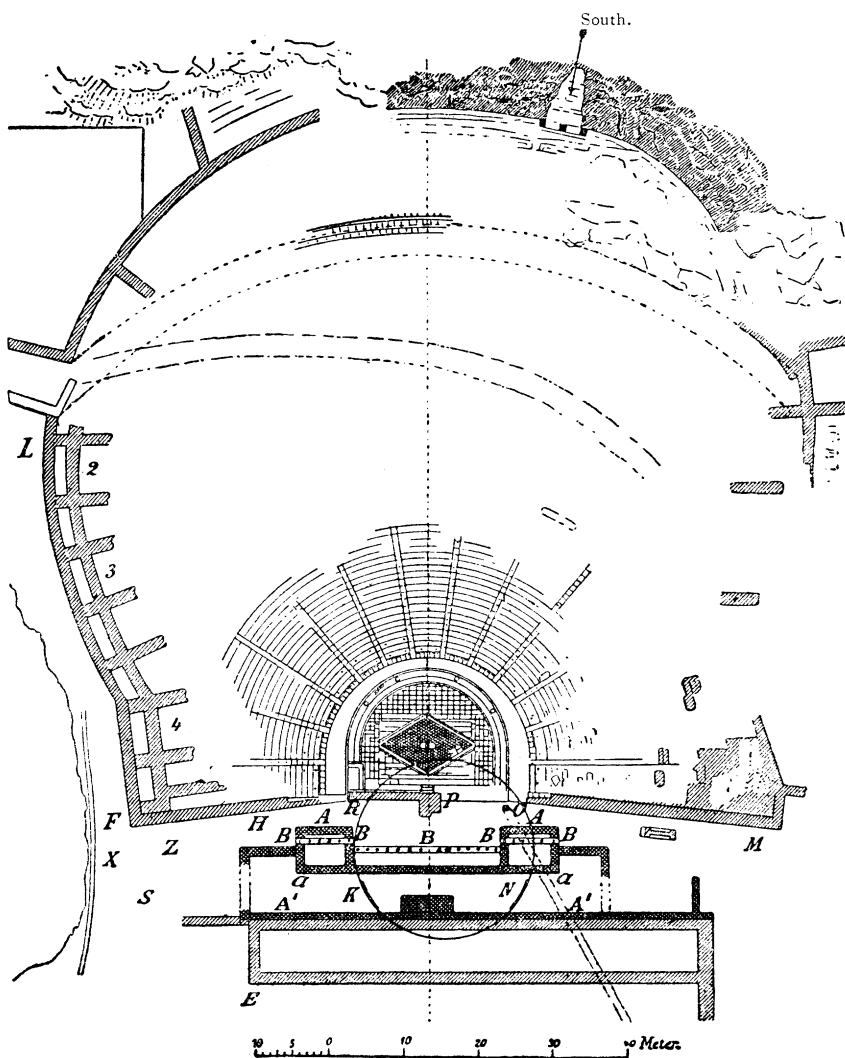


FIG. 1.

necessary in order to give room underneath for the disappearance of an actor, as in the Prometheus. Since there was a difference of 6 ft. between the level of the orchestra and the level of the earth under the supposed 'stage,' a height of 10-12 ft. for this would cause the actor to drop 16-18 ft.! Suidas (v. *Πρατίνας* and *Αισχύλος*) informs us that the wooden seats having broken down under the weight of the spectators, a stone *θέατρον* was built by the Athenians in Ol. 70. In this connection may be mentioned some walls not yet published on any plan and not on Fig. 1 because of the lack of accurate measurements. These walls, at *XZ*, are not parallel with *FH*, and from their direction could hardly have had anything to do with the orchestra belonging with the extant cavea. Whether these walls belonged with the *θέατρον* erected after the Pratinas-Choirilos-Aischylos breakdown can perhaps not be fully decided. They at least take us back a step nearer to that oldest stone cavea.

The walls of the oldest stage-buildings are represented on Fig. 1 by the shaded lines *AAA'A'* and are of the same age and method of construction as are the supporting walls of the cavea, e. g. *FL* 2, 3, 4. Wherever these walls were not exposed to view, as in the inner supporting walls of the cavea at 2, 3, 4 and in the lower foundations of the stage-buildings, they are constructed of blocks of breccia of the same size, shape and method of working throughout. If exposed to view, as in the outer cavea wall *LF* and in the upper courses of *AA'*, Peiraieus limestone was used. Where any portion of the superstructure remains the Peiraieus limestone is covered by Hymettos marble. The entire similarity of construction proves that these oldest foundations of stage-buildings and the cavea belong to the same period of building. But no ruin is known in Athens constructed, in the manner just described, of breccia, Peiraieus limestone and Hymettos marble which dates prior to the IV century B. C. At *H*, on a stone in the supporting wall of the cavea, are found  $\Omega$  and  $\sigma$ , the former of the shape in use after the time of Eukleides. At the corner *F* is to be seen the inscription published in CIA. I 499. The stone is in its original position, and was formerly covered by two courses of stone, which were between it and the corner *F*. The inscription, then, could not have been added after the stone was placed in its present location, but was placed there when the stone was in some previous position. It is variously dated from the middle of the V century (Julius) to 408 B. C. (Kirchhoff). The stone was

surely not removed from the earlier structure and built into this cavea wall immediately after this inscription was added. These two inscriptions, then, render the construction of the cavea walls, and hence of these oldest stage-buildings, before the end of the V century impossible. For all students of the theatre of Dionysos agree that these walls represent one and but one period of construction. Haigh (*Attic Theatre*, p. 123) contends that these inscriptions date the construction only as late as the end of the V century. Dörpfeld (*Wochenschrift*, 12. Apr. 1890, S. 423) well replies: "Dieser Einwand kann kaum ernstlich gemeint sein: denn wer die Geschichte Athens kennt wird niemals glauben, dass die Athener am Ende des fünften Jahrhunderts ein grosses steinernes Theater errichtet haben." The extant cavea and the oldest stage-buildings were constructed, then, in the IV century. In this century we know of one and but one great period of theatre-building; that mentioned in connection with the orator Lykourgos (cf. Müller, *B.-A.*, S. 86). Such important construction could hardly have been completed before his time and have passed unnoted by classic authors. In that event, too, nothing would have remained to be done by Lykourgos of sufficient importance to merit the attention which his work on the theatre has received. Hereafter, therefore, we shall refer to the cavea and the foundations *AAA'A'* under the name of Lykourgos.

The stylobate *BB* is later than the time of Lykourgos. When it was built the fronts of the paraskenia *AA* were cut back so that they ended beneath this stylobate. The original foundations of the paraskenia are still *in situ*. The upper course of *BB* is of Hymettos marble, but this marble rests directly on a rough, poorly constructed foundation largely made up of breccia. In IV-century construction in Athens this never occurs. A course of Peiræus limestone was in this period always placed between the breccia and the marble. Upon *BB* stood full columns whose diameter, .50 m., can still be measured. These, with the epistyle, would, at the time they were constructed, be about 12 ft. high. So this proskenion would in height correspond very nearly with the one in Epidauros. The upper surface of *BB* is exactly on a level with the pavement of the present orchestra, and the front of the slabs which compose this stylobate is worked out to receive the edges of slabs of a similar pavement. Therefore the surface of *BB* was on a level with the orchestra circle existing at the time of its construction. In Epidauros, Oropos and Eretria the pros-

kenion walls were constructed of half-columns, the spaces between which, as is proven at Eretria and Oropos, were filled by *πίνακες*. In the centre of each of these walls was a door leading out on the level of the orchestra. At Athens were full columns, and in the centre were three doors, only a single column separating each of the side doors from the one in the centre. This last, exactly in the middle of the stylobate, was the widest (1.60 m.). The other two are wider than the usual intercolumnar interval. The markings made on the stylobate by door-posts and hinges admit of no doubt as to the existence of the doors, and these could, of course, have had no meaning unless the intervals between the other columns had been closed in some way.

*RP* represents what still remains of the 'stage of Phaidros,' the erection of which in the III century A. D. is dated by the inscription (CIA. III 239). Its height is that customary in the later theatre, and a glance at the plan shows that its depth, back to the foundations of the stage-buildings, was also quite 'Roman.'

The reliefs which now adorn the front of this stage have been cut down to fit their present position. Their artistic execution is similar to that of the torsos of some large satyrs which are now found scattered among the ruins of the theatre, along with the fragments of the massive architrave which they helped to support. On this architrave can still be read (CIA. III 158) [*Διονύσῳ Ἑλ*]ευθεριῇ καὶ [*Νέρωνι Κλ*]αυδίῳ Καίσαρι Σε[*βαστῶ*] Γερμανικῶ κ. τ. λ. The unchanneled columns which, with the torsos, supported this architrave are much too large ever to have stood on *BB*. But immediately behind the Lykourgan wall *aa* stands a much later strengthening wall (not given on the plan). The wall *aa* thus strengthened alone, of the walls found in the ruins of the stage-buildings, could have borne the weight of the Neronian columns and their epistyle. This wall was therefore the front of Nero's stage-building. The stage itself extended over the stylobate *BB*, well forward towards the position of the front of the stage of Phaidros. For under Nero the wide Roman stage would be constructed.

The history of the theatre of Dionysos during the 800 years from Aischylos to Phaidros, so far as it can now be read in the ruins themselves, is briefly as follows:

1. Dating to the V century or earlier is the ancient orchestra *ONK*. In connection with this orchestra permanent stage-buildings never existed.

2. Such buildings were first completed in connection with a new theatron by Lykourgos, in the latter half of the IV century. The form of this 'scenae frons,' the wall *aa* with the paraskenia *AA*, was naturally that of the temporary wooden scenae frons which existed before this time, i. e. the form was what the requirements of the plays demanded. This, then, is the best representation we possess of the scenae frons before which the plays of the great dramatists of the V century were acted.

3. The stone proskenion on *BB* was added at some period considerably later than Lykourgos, but before the time of Nero. That such stone 'proskenia' did not exist in the V and IV centuries is a strong indication that the plays of the great dramatists were not exhibited before one fixed form of a background, but that proscenia were erected in accordance with the requirements of the various plays.

4. The 'Roman' stage was built under Nero.

5. This was altered in the time of Phaidros, about 290 A. D.

### *The Thymele.*

It becomes necessary to examine the evidence to see if the structure which we have thus far called the 'proskenion' was ever used as a 'stage.' Since the extant plays emphatically demand that there shall be no impediment to the free intermingling of actors and chorus, and since, if the actors were on a stage 12 ft. high while the chorus were on the orchestra-level, such free communication would be impossible, Hermann, Wieseler, Müller and many others have assumed that a supplementary stage was erected for the chorus, to which the name *θυμέλη* has been assigned. A. Müller (B.-A., S. 129 ff.) is the latest who has undertaken to prove the existence of such a platform. He first cites (S. 129, An. 1) Pollux, IV 123: *καὶ σκηνὴ μὲν ὑποκριτῶν ἴδιον, ἥ δὲ ὀρχήστρα τοῦ χοροῦ, ἐν ᾗ καὶ ἡ θυμέλη, εἴτε βῆμά τι οὖσα εἴτε βωμός.* But here it is simply said that the thymele was in the orchestra and was a kind of platform for a speaker (*βῆμα*), or an altar (*βωμός*). Neither of these statements indicates that it was a large platform, or that the chorus ever took position on it. The epigram of Simmias Thebanus (Müller, S. 129)—

τόν σε χοροῖς μέλψαντα Σοφοκλέα παῖδα Σοφίλου,  
τόν τραγικῆς Μούσης ἀστέρα Κεκρόπιοι  
πολλάκις ἐν θυμέλῃσι καὶ ἐν σκηνῇσι τεθληδὺς  
βλαιοὺς κ. τ. λ.



only testifies that the thymele and the skene were two important portions of the theatre. The inscription referring to the actress Basilla (CIG. 6750), ἐνὶ σκηναῖσι λαβοῦσαν παντοίης ἀρετῆς . . . εἴτα χοροῖσι πολλάκις ἐν θυμέλαις, shows in addition that the chorus was particularly associated with the thymele, as would naturally be the case, since this was the altar in the orchestra (Pollux, IV 123). The remark of Hesych. v. γλυκερῶ Σιδωνίῳ. δρᾶμα δέ ἐστιν ἐν ᾧ τῆς θυμέλης<sup>1</sup> ἄρχεται οὕτως, adds nothing. Here seems to be said only that the play opens with a choral ode. Isidor Origg. XVIII 47 "thymelici erant musici scaenici, qui in organis et lyris et citharis praecinebant, et dicti thymelici, quod olim in orchestra stantes cantabant super pulpitem, quod thymele vocabatur" is valuable as proving that the musicians had their place on some portion of this altar. The scholion to Aristides, III, p. 536, Dind. ὅτε εἰσῆει ἐν τῇ ὀρχήστρᾳ ἢ ἐστὶ θυμέλη, only states that the thymele was in the orchestra. So in Vitruvius, V 7, 2 "actores in scaena peragunt, reliqui autem artifices suas per orchestram praestant actiones itaque ex eo scaenici et thymelici graece separatim nominantur" the writer simply understands that the chorus performed its part in the orchestra and received a name from the thymele, the most important object in this portion of the theatre. The scholiast to Aristoph. Eq. 149: ὡς ἐν θυμέλῃ τὸ ἀνάβαινε is speaking of an *actor*, and the application of his words will appear when this passage in the Equites is considered. The story of Alkibiades and Eupolis in schol. Aristid. III 444 adds nothing. The only passages in which Müller finds that thymele really means platform are Gloss. Philox., ed. Vulc., p. 176, 18: pulpitem, θυμέλη, σανίδωμα, ἐπίπεδον; Charisius, I, p. 552, 18, Keil: pulpitus, θυμέλη. These definitions should be compared with Pollux, IV 123. They do not at all indicate that the thymele was a large platform for the chorus. The citations from Thomas Magister, p. 179, ed. Ritschl, and Strabo, p. 468, Cas. (Müller, S. 130, An. 1), as Müller rightly remarks, only show that the musicians had their place on the thymele. In the famous Hyporchema of Pratinas in Athen. XIV, p. 617 C: τίς ὁ θόρυβος ὅδε; τί τὰδε τὰ χορεύματα; τίς ὕβρις ἔμολεν ἐπὶ Διονυσιάδα πολυπάταγα θυμέλαν; the poet is complaining of the insolence of the flute-players in taking the lead, instead of being content to accompany the chorus. His τίς ὕβρις refers to the insolence of the musicians, and the πολυπάταγα θυμέλαν is so called because it resounded to their music. The words of Ulpian to

<sup>1</sup> Wecklein emends: τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς θυμέλης.

Dem. Mid., p. 502, explain that some one led the dishonored (τοὺς ἀτίμους) away from the altar (ἐκ τῆς θυμέλης); but they contain no hint of a platform. The grammarian Phrynichos, p. 163, Lob. (Müller, S. 130, An. 5), not only does not declare in favor of a special stage for the chorus, but by using λογεῖον and ὀρχήστρα shows that he is speaking of the later Roman theatre. For λογεῖον, as applied to the theatre, is never used till Roman times (Dörpfeld).

In fact, no one of the advocates of this special platform has as yet brought from the writings of the ancients one word of positive testimony for its existence, while the argument against its existence is overwhelming.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly possible that, among the many notices which have come down to us from antiquity concerning the Greek theatre, there should exist no mention of this special platform for the chorus, if it ever existed. Vitruvius (V 6, 7) takes pains to explain what he considers to be the chief points of difference between the Greek and the Roman theatres. Had such a platform ever existed, he could have mentioned nothing else that would have emphasized this difference so much. He is, however, silent on this point. Again, if such a θυμέλη were ever present, we should be compelled to believe that the Greeks first built their stage much too high; then, when they discovered their mistake, in order to bring the chorus within reach of the actors, they built each year another platform nearly as high. This requires us to believe that the Greeks were exceedingly unpractical.

The entire area of the orchestra was required for the dithyrambic choruses of the City Dionysia. This platform would have interfered with the motions of these cyclic choruses, and consequently must have been erected after the dithyrambic contests, and removed at the conclusion of the performance of the dramas. This renders the existence of such a θυμέλη improbable. For the yearly erection of such a staging special appliances would undoubtedly be present—sockets, holes for the supporting posts, mortices in the walls of the 'stage' front for the reception of beams, some indication of the inclined plane or steps leading from the parodoi to the platform. Not a trace of these things has ever been found.

In all but three of the plays of Aristophanes, actors and chorus go off together at the end. In the Wasps the poet tells us that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Petersen in Wiener Studien, VII, S. 175 ff., and Haigh, Attic Theatre, p. 156 f.

all depart dancing. They undoubtedly do the same in the Peace, the Birds, and the Ecclesiazusae. This action would be impossible in descending from a platform to the parodoi.

In several plays persons enter riding upon chariots drawn by horses. As will appear later, these could not have appeared on the so-called stage. Equally impossible is it that they could have ascended to this special platform. The din made by horses and chariots moving over such a hollow wooden platform is in itself sufficient to make such a theory improbable.

The fronts of the 'stages' at Athens, Epidauros, Oropos, and Eretria were ornamented with handsome columns; in the middle of each 'stage'-front was a door leading out on the level of the orchestra. This special platform for the chorus would have cut these columns and doors in half, and they would then have presented a very unpleasing appearance to the eyes of the spectators. To say that the theatre was used for other than dramatic purposes is no sufficient reply to this argument. The theatre, particularly the 'stage,' was principally for theatrical purposes, and it requires most special proof to show that the architecture found therein was intended for some other use.

The size and shape of this imaginary platform are not the same in any two of the many authors who have advocated its existence. In Epidauros the 'stage' was 4 m. high. Since the sole object of the platform now under consideration was to bring the choreutae and actors near each other, it is fair to assume for Epidauros at least 2.50 m. as its height. In Epidauros the *θρόνοι* of the front row of seats rest on a basis whose upper surface is exactly on a level with the orchestra (cf. plan in *Πρακτικά*, 1883, πιν. Α' 2). The height of the seat of these *θρόνοι* from the basis is .43 m.—practically the same as that of the similar chairs at Athens and Oropos. The average man as he sits has the level of his eyes not more than .80 m. above the seat. From the level of the orchestra to the level of the eyes of the spectators in the front row of seats at Epidauros, the distance would not be greater than 1.25 m. Since the thymele was to be large enough for all the evolutions of twenty-four choreutae (in comedy), it is not too much to say that it should extend from the front of the 'stage' to the centre of the orchestra. Fig. 2 represents the appearance of the 'stage' and of such a thymele to the spectator in the middle seat of the front row in this theatre. *HA* is the line of sight from the spectator's eye to the top of the stage; *HEB* the corresponding



line over the front edge of the thymele. If the choreutae were near *E* on this platform their bodies would effectually conceal the stage from the spectator at *H*. If they stood in the rear near *D*, only the upper portions of their own bodies would be visible. To avoid this last difficulty the slope of the thymele must be nearly as great as that of *BE*—rather a sharp incline, it must be confessed.

But we must consider not only the man who sits at *H*, but also the spectators at the extreme ends of this row of seats. Here the spectator was not, as at *H*, separated from this thymele by a distance of 12.25 meters, but the edge of the platform must have been very near to him. If, as was natural, the thymele covered the entire width of the orchestra, its edge was only 2.50 m. from the *θρόνοι*. Every foot taken from the width to withdraw the edge farther away removed one foot from each side of the platform. A simple mathematical calculation shows that this process of cutting would soon render the platform too small for use. In any event, the spectators at the ends would be much nearer to the thymele than those in the centre of the front row. Consequently the edge of the platform must have been so much the lower that they might see over it. The slope towards the ends of the rows of seats was greater, then, than that towards *H*, and the edges of this platform opposite the end seats could have been very little higher than the eyes of the spectators sitting there, i. e. very little more than 1.25 m. high. But if this double slope towards the two ends existed, the persons seated in these portions of the front row could have seen only the half of the platform next to them; the opposite half would have been cut off from their eyes by the higher middle portion of the thymele (along *DE*, Fig. 2). The shape of this platform must have been, then, like the half of a gigantic turtle-shell, with the diameter placed against the 'stage' and the incline extending in all directions to the edges. This is a self-evident absurdity. The only way to overcome all these difficulties is to reduce the height of the platform to 1.25 m., the level of the eyes of front row of spectators. But in that case the stage would be over 8 ft. above the level of this platform, and communication between actors and chorus would be practically as difficult as if no such thymele existed.

The argument for Epidauros applies fully at Athens, except that the base on which the Athenian thronoi stand is .30 m. above the level of the orchestra. In Oropos a new difficulty is found (cf. *Πρακτικά*, 1886, πιν. 3). The chairs of honor are in their

original position, and are actually placed within the orchestra. It is incredible that any platform could ever have been erected immediately before the eyes of the occupants of these thronoi.

Of great weight in this connection are the discoveries in the theatre of Eretria (cf. Preprints of the Am. Journal of Arch., Vol. VII, No. 3). An inscription found in the theatre (v. Jour., p. 23) proves that the theatre was at least as old as the IV century. The oldest portion is probably of a yet earlier date. Exactly in the centre of the orchestra (cf. plan in Jour.) a flight of steps leads down into an underground passage which extends to a position behind the 'stage'-front, where similar steps lead again to the surface. The work of the walls of this tunnel is excellent; it is older than the stone 'stage'-front—which corresponds to the similar structures at Epidauros, Oropos, and Athens; it is .89 m. wide and 2 m. high (C. L. Brownson in Jour., p. 43), and it is entirely unconnected with any drain. Its only possible purpose was to allow an actor to pass from behind the 'stage'-front and appear in the middle of the orchestra. 'Charon's steps' (Pollux, IV 127) appear clearly to us moderns for the first time in Eretria. In Sikyon (cf. Am. Jour. of Arch., Vol. V, Fig. 9) a similar passage has been found, but this tunnel served also as a drain. Such underground passages exist also in Magnesia and Tralles. So the Eretrian tunnel by no means stands as an isolated example. These passages would have been entirely unnecessary had a special platform for the chorus existed. One would surely not expect the ghost of Dareios, for example, to pass through this passage to the orchestra and then climb to such a thymele.

In view of all these objections, a special platform such as has been imagined for the chorus seems an utter impossibility.

### *The So-called Greek Stage.*

The 'stages' of Epidauros, Athens, and Eretria were about 4 m. high. The corresponding structure in the smaller theatre of Oropos was only 2.51 m. high. The appearance of the 'stage'-front in each of the four theatres was much the same. The depth of this 'stage' was in Epidauros 3 m., in Athens 2.25 m. (Dörpfeld), in Eretria 2.14 m., in Oropos 1.93 m. This depth does not, however, represent the space at hand for the actors during the presentation of a play. In front of the wall of the stage-building must have been placed the *δισκήλια*. A. Müller (B.-A., S. 140 ff.) explains what this was in classic times. The scenes in the dramas

in which this platform was used will be discussed later. Suffice it here to say that the *distegia* must have been broad enough to contain several persons and to permit freedom of action. The real scenery must then have been placed on a framework in front of the wall of the stage-building (Müller, B.-A., S. 142), far enough away to allow room for the *distegia*. Two feet in depth would be altogether too narrow accommodations for the numbers who at times appeared on this platform. Yet, subtracting two feet from the depth of the 'stage,' and there would remain for actual use in the presentation of a play a shelf, at Athens and Eretria less than five feet deep, at Oropos four feet deep, and even in Epidauros only about eight feet deep. These are hard facts of actual measurement which cannot be explained away. If this structure was a 'stage' in one theatre it was a 'stage' in all, and the same *distegia* was necessary in each.

The scene of the drama was often a hillside, part way up the slope of which was the mouth of a cavern to which, in 'Philoktetes,' a path leads up. Taf. III im Theatergebäude von J. H. Strack shows the impossibility of representing such a scene on such a 'stage' as we are discussing. Under the various plays will be noted the many other instances where it would be simply impossible to accommodate, on any such platform, the accessories actually mentioned in the text. Yet we are asked to believe that, in addition to the scenery, the altars and other accessories, the in many instances numerous train of actors and mutes, even the chorus also appeared, moved and danced on this shelf 8, 5, 4 ft. deep! It has been soberly maintained also that chariots and horses were driven out upon it!

It has been customary to assume that the necessary connection between the 'stage' and orchestra was formed by the steps mentioned by Pollux, IV 127, and Athenaios de Mach., p. 29, Wesch. A flight of steps 12 ft. high reaches the ground some 15 ft. from the foot of a perpendicular let fall from its top. If these steps extended directly into the orchestra, they would render a considerable space useless for the evolutions of the chorus. If they were placed close against the 'stage'-front, they would partially conceal the columns which ornamented these 'stage'-fronts, and would therefore be a very ugly addition. Up and down such lofty stairs it would be impossible for actors and chorus to pass in the many scenes which require quick and easy communication between the entire body of the chorus and the actors. In fact,

the movements of the tragic actors, incumbered as they were by their robes and impeded by the lofty cothurnos, over such steps would have been attended by much of difficulty and even of danger. On the well-preserved epistyle of the 'stage'-front at Oropos there exists not a scratch or a mark to show that steps ever rested against this 'stage'; nor has there been found in any Greek theatre any indication that they ever existed.

Vitruvius, V 6, is describing the Roman theatre; Pollux, IV 124, 126, seems also to have this later theatre in mind. Fettered, however, by these passages and by the information obtained from such Roman theatres as those of Orange and Aspendos, writers have been unwilling to believe that the doors in the 'stage'-fronts of Epidauros, Athens, Oropos, and Eretria could have been meant for the actors. The theory has obtained that there must have been at least three doors opening on the 'stage.' Yet the ruins of no Greek theatre are so well preserved as to show whether or not doors ever opened from the wall of the stage-buildings on this 'stage' (Dörpfeld, *Wochensch.* 1890, S. 1536), and in most of the extant dramas only one door in the background is required. Beneath the stage-buildings at Eretria (cf. plan in *Jour. of Arch.* cited above) is a finely constructed vaulted passage 1.98 m. wide and 2.95 m. high. For the entrance of the public and the chorus the parodoi afforded ample room. The orchestra is some 3.50 m. below the level of the earth behind the stage-buildings. That this tunnel was constructed and so well constructed is sufficient proof of its importance. This passage, then, as well as the tunnel leading into the middle of the orchestra, could hardly have had any other use than as a means of ingress and egress for the actors while the performance was going on in front of the 'stage,' not upon it.

The plans of the theatres of Epidauros, Athens, Oropos, Eretria, Megalopolis (cf. *Jour. of Hell. Stud.*, vol. XI, p. 295) and Termessos (cf. Spratt, *Travels in Lycia*, p. 240) may serve as examples to prove that the rows of seats in a Greek theatre extend over an arc of more than 180°. The seats in the ends of the rows are so arranged that the spectators occupying them have an excellent view of what is going on in the orchestra; but in order to see the top of the 'stage' they must turn themselves half about. The Greek theatre was not hemmed in by the walls of a building. It would have been easy, therefore, to turn these seats so that their occupants could have had an unobstructed view of the 'stage,'



had this view been desirable. If the 'stage' had been used, the distance between the public and the actors would have been so great that the chorus would necessarily be the important element in the performance. The great force of the last two arguments is only fully appreciated when one is in the theatre itself.

The height of this 'stage,' the lack of means of communication with the orchestra, its slight depth, its distance from the cavea, the doors leading out on the level of the orchestra, the arrangement of the seats themselves, all unite to prove that this structure could never have been used as a stage.

Against this emphatic testimony we have the word of Vitruvius (V 7) that this *proskēnion* was the stage of the Greek theatre. The general correctness of his architectural views proves that the architectural authorities from which he drew his information concerning that earlier theatre which he calls Greek were excellent. Misled by the existence of a stage in the later theatre and by the term *λογεῖον* as applied to this, and finding no other structure on the plans of the earlier theatres before him to which the name could be applied, he made the mistake of naming the *proskēnion* *λογεῖον*. The only theatre he would naturally have an opportunity to inspect was that theatre which he called 'Roman.'

Haigh (*Attic Theatre*, p. 158) maintains that the *proskēnion* was used as a stage, but conjectures that the stage of the V century was only 6 or 7 ft. high. For this assumption he has, of course, no proof. The latest plays of Euripides and Aristophanes required the same freedom of communication between actors and chorus as did the earliest plays of Aischylos. There could have been no increase in height in the V century. The historical fact is that with the disappearance of the chorus in the IV and III centuries there developed what we know as the Roman stage. If a 12-ft. stage had ever been used I agree with Todt (*Philol. Suppl.* VI, S. 131) that it existed when the 'Prometheus' was first given. But the stage-theory requires two sudden springs. We have absolutely nothing between the table of Thespis and the 'stage' at Epidauros, and there is no intermediate step between this 'stage' 4 m. high and the 5-ft. Roman stage. No satisfactory explanation is offered for these changes, which are contrary both to reason and to the historical development of the classic drama and the classic theatre from the age of Aischylos to late Roman times.

The inscription on the epistyle of this structure at Oropos puts beyond doubt that its proper name is *προσκήνιον*. This agrees with the article in Photios, *τρίτος ἀριστεροῦ ὁ μὲν ἀριστερὸς στοῖχος ὁ πρὸς τῷ θεάτρῳ ἦν, ὁ δὲ δεξιὸς πρὸς τῷ προσκηνίῳ*. The words of Glycera in Alciphron, Ep. II 4, are perhaps not to be reckoned here, since the latest editor, Hercher, following a hint of Meineke, reads *ἐν τοῖς παρασκηνίοις* instead of *ἐν τοῖς προσκηνίοις*. But in the Life of Nero, 26 "interdiu quoque clam gestatoria sella delatus in theatrum seditionibus pantomimorum ex parte proscenii superiore signifer simul ac spectator aderat," Suetonius refers to the top of the *proskenion*, i. e. 'stage,' in the words "ex parte proscenii superiore." CIG. 4283, from the theatre of Patara, distinguishes sharply between the *προσκήνιον* and the later *λογεῖον*. Athen. XIII, p. 587 B, Photios and Suidas v. *Νάννιον*, Suidas v. *προσκήνιον*, Cramer, Anecd. Paris, I 19, Duris in Athen. XII, p. 536 A (Müller, B.-A., S. 117, 168), have reference either to the painted decoration in front of the *προσκήνιον* or to that temporary structure which existed before the stone *προσκήνιον* was built.<sup>1</sup>

On the plan of the Odeion of Herodes Attikos in Athens (Baumeister, Fig. 1824) the front of the *λογεῖον* and the row of columns which formed the background before which the play was presented are both indicated. This row of columns is 1.84 m. from the wall behind them.<sup>2</sup> That is, they formed the *προσκήνιον* in this Roman theatre, of the same form, position and purpose as the *προσκήνιον* which stood on *BB* in the neighboring theatre of Dionysos. The *προσκήνιον* remained the same throughout the history of the classic theatre; in the later, the 'Roman' theatre, a stage, a *λογεῖον* was placed before it.

The word *σκηνή* refers in general to the 'stage'-building, and in no classic writer does it mean 'stage' (cf. Reisch in Zeitsch. für österreich. Gymnasien, 1887, S. 270 ff.). Therefore the *ὑποσκήνιον* is not the room 'under the stage' or even under the *προσκήνιον*. Pollux (IV 124), in *ὑποσκήνιον κίοσι καὶ ἀγαλματίοις κεκόσμητο*, by *ὑποσκήνιον* plainly refers to the wall which the inscription from Oropos calls the *προσκήνιον*. As often happens elsewhere in Pollux, a mistake has been made in the term used. For in IV 124 he explains by *τὰ ὑπὸ σκηνῇ* the things that have plainly taken place

<sup>1</sup> Synes. Aeg. III 8, p. 1286 *εἰς τοῦτο κινωφθαλμίζοιτο διὰ τοῦ προσκηνίου* refers to the entire stage-buildings.

<sup>2</sup> Tuckermann, Das Od. des Her. Att., S. 1. T. is in error when he assumes that other columns were placed above these (Dörpfeld).

'behind the scenes.' ὑπὸ σκηνήν has this same meaning in Pollux, IV 130 ὑπὸ τῇ σκηνῇ θπισθεν; Philost. Vit. Apollon. VI 11, p. 244 Ol. τὸ ὑπὸ σκηνῆς ἀποθνήσκειν; Plutarch, Phocion, c. V Φωκίωνα . . . περιπατεῖν ὑπὸ σκηνήν; Arat. XV νυνὶ δὲ ὑπὸ σκηνήν ἑωρακώς. With this meaning Athenaios agrees in XIV, p. 631 Ἀσωπόδωρος ὁ Φλιάσιος . . . αὐτὸς ἔτι ἐν τῷ ὑποσκήνῳ, τί τοῦτ'; εἶπεν. Therefore Sommerbrodt (Scaenica, S. 140) is correct when he interprets ὑποσκήνια, in Pollux, IV 123, as the rooms in the stage-buildings, in the σκηνή.

The references to the cyclic chorus in Dem. Mid. 17, to the Ithyphalloi in Harpok., p. 100, 22, Athenaios, XIV, p. 622 B, and to the Phallophoroi in Athen. XIV, p. 622 D, may be dismissed with the remark that it is absurd to suppose that they entered the theatre from the skene upon a lofty stage and then clambered down a flight of steps to reach their position in the orchestra.

The attempt to prove the existence of a stage in the Athenian theatre of the V century from vase-paintings found in Southern Italy has decidedly not succeeded.<sup>1</sup> With perhaps a single exception (Baumeister, Fig. 904), there is no trace of the Old Comedy on these vases. No one of the scenes has been referred to the Middle or the New Comedy. The oldest of these vases goes no farther back than the beginning of the III century. They are found only in Magna Grecia. It is incredible that the vase-painters of this period in Southern Italy should go back more than a hundred years and select from Athens the scenes which they placed on their wares, particularly when no Athenian vase-painter had set them an example. In no other field has the Italian vase-painter shown such originality. A chorus is never found in these representations. The stage is of the rudest description. The steps leading therefrom are too narrow and too steep to meet the requirements of the Attic dramas of the V century. We are warranted, then, in saying that these scenes were taken from the 'Phlyakenpossen,' as these were presented in Southern Italy at the time when these vases were manufactured.

#### *Outline of the Development of the Greek Theatre.*

Beyond question, from the earliest times an altar stood in the orchestra.<sup>2</sup> The previous discussion has clearly shown that this altar was sometimes called θυμέλη. Around this altar, before the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Arnold in Baumeister, S. 1750 ff.; Heydermann, Jahrbuch d. k. Arch. Ins. 1886, S. 260 ff., and A. Müller, Philol. Suppl., Bd. VI, S. 59 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Suidas v. καθάρσιον; Pollux, IV 103; Plut. Cimon, c. 9; Philost. Vit. Apoll. IV 22.

beginning of the real drama, the assembled crowd danced.<sup>1</sup> The first actor stood on a table near this altar.<sup>2</sup> This table is also called *θυμέλη* in Et. Mag., p. 458, 30; Orion, Theb. Etym., p. 72; Cyrill. Lex. in Alberti on Hesych. I, p. 1743. In speaking of the theatre of later times also, the actors are also brought into close connection with the *θυμέλη*, as in Diodor. 4, 5; Plutarch, Demetr. 12, and De Pyth. Or. 22; Alciphron, II 3, 16; Suidas v. *θυμελικοί*; Plut. Sulla 36; Athen. XV, p. 699 A; CIG. 3493. Since the musicians and the *ῥαβδοῦχοι* (cf. Suidas and Schol. Aristoph., Peace 733) had their place on this *θυμέλη*, it could hardly have been that portion of the altar on which the offering was laid. In Olympia that portion of the altar on which the priests stood was called the *πρόθυσις* (Dörpfeld). In the theatre, as we have seen, it was called *θυμέλη*, and an inscription from Delos in Bull. Cor. Hell. 1890, p. 396 ἡ *θυμέλη τοῦ βωμοῦ*, clearly shows that the thymele was a portion of the altar.

So long as there was only one actor this *θυμέλη*, this step, as it were, beside the *βωμός* on which the actor stood, was sufficient. As soon as the real drama began, with the introduction of the second actor under Aischylos, more room was needed. Then the cothurnos (Cramer, Anecd. Paris, I 19) was invented, and the elevation of the *θυμέλη* became movable under the feet of the actors. The earlier explanation that the cothurnos was added to give the actors the appearance of demigods and heroes is not sufficient. There were not only Prometheus, Agamemnon, Theseus and Oidipos, but also heralds, nurses, slaves and ordinary mortals like Xerxes to be represented. There is no aesthetical reason why these latter should be made to appear unusually large. In the fact that the actors were brought down from the *θυμέλη* and placed on the same level with the choreutae is found the reason why they were made taller and given a more splendid costume. By these means they were at all times readily distinguishable from the members of the chorus among whom they were moving. When one has seen 24 men march into the great orchestra at Epidauros, and go through with such manœuvres as we may imagine the chorus performed, the objection that, even with the aid of the cothurnos and the tragic robe, the actors would have been hidden by the chorus ceases to exist. It is as if the performers in a modern opera-house took their position in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Euanthius, De trag. et com., p. 4; Max., Tyr. dissert. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Pollux, IV 123, calls this a 'meat-table,' *ἐλθεός*.

parquette—on the floor of the house—while the audience sits in the boxes and galleries around three sides of them. The chorus of 24 even was very small in proportion to the great area of the orchestra, and even if grouped in a body, the choreutae could have concealed the actors only from a very small portion of the audience at one time. It is nowhere in the classic drama distinctly said that the chorus was instructed not to stand between the actors and the audience, but neither does the modern opera contain directions for the crowds which fill the stage to remain in the background, nor does the text of the Passion Play of Oberammergau command the chorus to fall back on either side, that the action may be seen.

As soon as an actor had more than one part to play, a booth, a *σκηνή*, was necessary for the change of costume. When the second actor was added, and the action was given a fixed place, it was most natural that the actors should occupy the ground immediately before this temple or palace. So, while the entire orchestra might be necessary for the dances of the 'stasima,' that half of the orchestra next to the *proskenion* became naturally the 'scene' of the play. For the lively movement of the comedy the cothurnos was unsuited, and so was discarded; but it is from the comedy that we obtain some of the strongest proof that actors and chorus were together in the orchestra.

A *λογεῖον* for the actors we find mentioned for the first time after the chorus has practically disappeared from the drama. When the chorus was no longer present, then the entire orchestra circle was no longer necessary. The actors remained as always, in the part in front of the *proskenion*; the other half could be used for other purposes. To separate the spectators in the front row of seats from the combats of gladiators and of wild beasts, in Athens the balustrade of marble slabs was erected. In Pergamon and Assos the lower rows of seats were removed till the lowest row remaining was on a level with the *λογεῖον* which had been constructed. In the theatres of Aizani, Telmessos, Patara and Aspendos the lower rows of seats are also on a level with the stage. If in these theatres the space between the *λογεῖα* and the front rows of seats were filled up to the level of the *λογεῖα*, there would then exist the orchestra circle of the V-century theatre.<sup>1</sup> For in the Greek theatres like those of Epidauros, Athens,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Durm, *Baukunst der Griechen*, S. 213.

Peiraeus, Oropos, Delos, Myra, Patara, Telmessos, Side, Eretria, Megalopolis, the circle of the orchestra does not quite reach the front of the proskenion.

In the Roman theatre, according to Vitruvius, the senators sat in this portion of the old Greek orchestra that was no longer needed for the proper presentation of the plays. If the senators had been seated on the same level with the actors, those in the back rows could not have seen over the heads of those in front. Here arose another reason for lowering that half of the elder orchestra in which the senators were sitting, or of elevating the stage on which the actors performed.

When, for any reason, this difference in level existed, the public could no longer enter through the old parodoi and pass from thence to their seats. So in the Roman theatres we find two passages into the theatre, the old parodoi now leading to the stage alone, and new vaulted passages under the wings of the rows of seats into the new lower level of the orchestra. Since in the Roman theatre the old parodoi were used only by the actors, it required but one step more in the development to roof these passages over and thus bring the walls of the stage-buildings into connection with the walls of the 'theatron,' thus rendering a roof over the cavea a possibility.

No author of the V or IV century mentions a 'stage' in the theatre. For the word *ὀκρίβαντα* in Plato's *Conviv.*, p. 194 B, refers only to an elevation in the circular odeion where the rehearsals were held.<sup>1</sup> When a portion of the orchestra was lowered to form an arena, this was called *κόνιστρα*. The portion remaining for the actors also received a new name, *λογεῖον*, because it was now distinctively the 'speaking place' of the actors. Since in the Roman theatre the boundary line between the *κόνιστρα* and the *λογεῖον* passed through the centre of the old orchestra, the thymele, the altar could be placed at will in either.

This late Greek, the so-called Roman theatre, is described correctly by Suidas and Et. Mag. v. *σκηνή*. *Σκηνή ἐστίν ἡ μέση θύρα τοῦ θεάτρου, παρασκήνια δὲ τὰ ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν τῆς μέσης θύρας (χαλκᾷ καγκελλα). καὶ ἵνα σαφέστερον εἴπω [σκηνή ἢ] μετὰ τὴν σκηνὴν εὐθὺς καὶ τὰ παρασκήνια ἢ ὀρχήστρα. αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὁ ἐκ στανίδων ἔχων τὸ ἔδαφος ἐφ' οὗ θεατρίζουσιν οἱ μῖμοι. εἶτα μετὰ τὴν ὀρχήστραν βωμὸς ἦν τοῦ Διονύσου, τετράγωνον οἰκοδόμημα κενὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ μέσου, ὃ καλεῖται θυμέλη παρὰ τὸ θύειν, μετὰ δὲ τὴν θυμέλην ἢ κόνιστρα τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ κάτω ἔδαφος τοῦ θεάτρου.*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rohde, *Rhein. Mus.* 38, p. 255 f.; Dörp., *Wochensch.* 1890, S. 470.

First is the *σκηνή* described as the middle door, which was the most prominent object in the wall facing the spectators. On either side of this were the *παρασκήνια*. Next is mentioned the *λογεῖον*, rightfully called by its old name, *ὀρχήστρα*. The altar of Dionysos, the *θυμέλη*, is named, as we should naturally expect, between the *λογεῖον* and that latest addition to the theatre, the *κόνιστρα*. In the introduction to the 'Clouds' the scholiast also says: *ἐν τῇ ὀρχήστρᾳ τῷ νῦν λεγομένῳ λογεῖῳ*. Isidor, Origg. 18, 43, explains: *pulpitus, qui pulpitus orchestra vocabatur*, and 44: *orchestra autem pulpitus erat*.

The references of the scholiasts and the grammarians to the *λογεῖον* are easily explained. Through ignorance of the true arrangement of the classic theatre, they have sometimes ascribed to it the *λογεῖον* which belonged only to later times, a natural mistake when we consider the centuries which separated some of these writers from the theatre which they sought to describe. Again, they may have been misled by the fact that when a classic play was revived it was necessarily adapted to the 'Roman' theatre.

JOHN PICKARD.